

## OUR RECENT TRAVEL TO MEXICO - July 2020 - G & M

Everyone was a little apprehensive about any travel, let alone international travel to Mexico. However, our group had been waiting for a year to return to Desire Pearl. While some had canceled their trip for obvious valid reasons, most had vowed to travel. So off we went with our fingers crossed and many face masks.

Miami airport was uneventful. Lines through TSA were moving quickly, everyone is required to wear a mask and social distance. Once inside the terminal we proceeded to the American Express Centurion Lounge only to find that they are all closed across the United States with no plans of reopening anytime soon. Luckily, we did find that the American Airlines Admirals Clubs were open. Everything is very different, as you can expect at the Lounge. You are greeted at the door and escorted to your desired seating area. As the Miami airport lounge is very large, social distancing is not a problem. There are no more buffets, no self-service drinks and coffee, no candies, or nuts. It has been replaced by a personal waiter who will bring you the beverage of your choice, food to order from a digital menu, snacks prepacked in a brown bag with cookies and mints. As soon as someone leaves the lounge, there is someone there to disinfect the area they were sitting at in preparation for the next guest. All in all, it was a very pleasurable experience and we appreciated the attention and liquor before our flight.

At the gate before the flight everyone took seats with the social distancing in mind. Here we found our first surprise. We discovered that not only was American Airlines selling the middle seats, they were offering \$\$ to anyone to change flight because the flight was over booked. Later we heard from other travelers almost all airlines were packed with travelers to Mexico. It is both a great to see that people are starting to travel again and a little unnerving to see a plane with every seat full. There are still airlines out there respecting the empty middle seat policy so look around if this makes you uncomfortable.

Mexico has done a great job of putting all forms needed to enter the country online so that you have nothing to fill out on arrival or on the plane.



Immigration Form <https://www.mexicotouristcard.com/>

Health Questioner <https://afac.hostingerapp.com/>

Customs Declaration Form

<https://siat.sat.gob.mx/PTSC/DPE/faces/resources/pages/declaracion/declaracion.jsf>

## ARRIVAL IN CANCUN, MEXICO



First sign that we were not in Kansas anymore was when we turned a corner in the arrival's terminal on the way to our luggage pickup and there was a person in full hazmat suit, twin monitors and a thermal camera. The system was able to scan all the people walking down the hallway at the same time without stopping. The monitors gave the operator a sign of everyone's body temperature in seconds. WOW I wish we could say we had seen anything like this when entering the USA.

We arrived in the new terminal #4 and a few things are very different. Replaced is the stop light where you pressed the button and hoped to get a green light to make it thru customs quickly. Now there is a large hallway with many people directing what seemed to be A LOT of arriving travelers to the baggage check lines. In speaking to our travelers, I would say the number was 50% or higher. However, it does go very quickly, and they are fast on their inspections and before you know it you are on your way.

The walk thru the time-share black hole is still there but they are all wearing mask. It was very easy to ignore them all and just walk through. Outside we were greeted by Lomas Travel which took our baggage and sprayed it all with disinfectant before loading it in a private transfer to the resort. Hand sanitizer was sprayed in our hands and off we went. Again, as everywhere the greeters and drivers all are wearing mask.

Arrival at Desire Pearl brought its on set of welcomed surprises. First, they sprayed our luggage again with disinfectant. Then there is a special door mat for you to step on that coats the bottom of your shoes with disinfectant solution. Then a mat where you brush and dry your shoe soles. On entering the resort there is an iPad on a stand where it scans your face and takes your temperature in a few seconds. Once you have made it past this area you are free to remove your

face mask. The hotel staff however at no point - Again - at NO POINT will employees remove their mask. Not the entertainment crew during beach or water volleyball, theme nights, entertainment, restaurants, waiters around the pool.



As in most places in the United States, the Desire Pearl front reception area has plexiglass dividers and even disinfected pens for single use by guests before getting disinfected again. Since hotel occupancy is capped at somewhere below 50%, access to rooms do not take very long after you check in.



Our first walk around the property revealed a new pattern for the pool chairs with 6 feet between every set of 2 chairs. To be very honest, this did not seem to affect the vibe and was actually very

comfortable. People in the pool can socially distance if they wish, however I cannot really say I saw anyone doing this.

Let's address the elephant in the room: We both had big discussion before traveling on how we would handle the mask situation, the social distancing, the eventually required hugs, kisses, that all our friends would want to share with us after 1 year of not seeing us. Honestly, we had not planned to wear a mask 24/7 but had discussed wearing mask in closed area like the disco and trying to avoid unnecessary contact. I am not sure what happened, maybe all the safety checks made us more comfortable, maybe we were just happy to see our sexy friends, maybe it was the tequila! Whatever happened, the masks (and social distancing at the resort) came off as soon as the clothes did! The only thing I am sorry is that we never got to wear all those neat masks we had bought in all colors and even one with LED display... OH WELL



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Desire Pearl has always been more than accommodating and service has always been impeccable. However, this time everything seemed to have been turned up a notch. EVERYONE at the resort checked in with us every day, they made sure everything we needed or wanted was available. The best way I can describe it is that they WERE GENUINELY SO VERY HAPPY TO SEE US. Everyone from the General Manager who has been physically living at the property, the butlers, maids, waiters, bartenders, chefs, front desk, EVERYONE! made your heart warm with their smiles and their appreciation.

IT WAS AMAZING and we were so sad to have to leave them all. It was like leaving family. But July 10-17, 2021 we and the Hellians return to Cancun to visit Desire Riviera Maya for a week. Are you ready? If you're reading this, you're invited to join us. Give us a call or contact Castaways Travel at: [Info@castawaystravel.com](mailto:Info@castawaystravel.com)

For all those thinking is it safe to travel right now to Mexico? Well that is a very personal decision. I can only tell you what our thoughts are after returning. Right now, it's not 100% safe

to travel anywhere in the world, not in the USA, not even to your local grocery, workplace, or anywhere else. If you are going to stay at home and limit your exposure then yes you will be safer than traveling to Mexico but if you are willing to use common sense, follow all recommendations from Mexico and the resort, you will probably be safer than traveling anywhere in the USA. There are risks with anything you do in these hard times BUT for us we felt it was a safe choice and we were very pleased to see how hard the resort staff is trying to keep everyone safe.